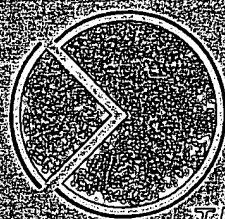


November 1990

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Pizza Today

The Monthly Professional Guide To Pizza Profits

STARR QUALITY: WINNING THE PIZZA GAME



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MEET THE SPEAKER
BART STARR



all pepperoni," he says. "The eyes are black olives—whenever you use olives, they must be chopped real fine. The nose is a circle filled with mozzarella and outlined with black olives. The moustache is all black olives."

On Mickey Mouse, he says, the tongue is made of pepperoni. Dick Tracy's hat is made of mozzarella and black olives.

Artistry and ability must be combined with another ingredient: patience. "Instead of the 30 to 40 seconds it takes to make a regular pie, a character pizza takes 45 minutes to an hour," Mania says. "First, I draw the figure on the inside of a pizza box. Then I cut out the figure, stretch the dough, put the cardboard on top of the dough and trace the figure on the dough."

"I do it on a screen," he explains. "If you do it on a paddle, it'll lose shape. Mario Brothers has a pretty rounded face. But Bart Simpson is short and thin-faced, so you have room left over on each side. That's why you put the character on a screen instead of a paddle—so it won't shrink back."

The character pizzas are made on



Mickey's pepperoni tongue and black olive eyes make him almost look like the real mouse.

regular pizza skins. "Our signature pizza is a deep dish," says Mania, "but

when I tried characters on a deep dish, they came out too thick. So most of the time I use our 16-inch large pie, although in mid-September I started doing them on our extra-large 28-inch party-size pie. They've turned out well."

Mania said he gets at least three requests a week for character pizzas. "Sometimes it's six or seven. Most of the character pizzas are for kids' parties. We advertise in a couple newspapers, one that circulates to the George Washington Bridge. One lady called from 45 minutes away to ask about what we do."

How does Mania find time to make pizzas that take 60 to 90 times as long as regular pizzas?

"I require people to give me at least one day's notice," he says. "Say you want to pick up a Mickey Mouse pizza at 1:00 p.m. Saturday. We open at 11:00 a.m. I'll come in early, do all my other work, and set aside time to make the character pizza. I'll start on Mickey at 11:30 a.m. and have it done by 12:30 p.m."

(Continued on page 44)

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(Continued from page 58)

glomerate (with approximately 1,000 Pizza Huts serving customers in more than 60 foreign countries). PepsiCo also owns Taco Bell, La Petite Boulangerie, and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Pizza Hut now has approximately 7,500 restaurants throughout the world in its franchise organization.

Promotions & Marketing

Over the past three decades, Pizza Hut has not only set the standard for restaurant advertising, but has created novel—and sometimes socially beneficial—methods for keeping their products on the public palate.

"Pizza Pete," born in 1958, was their first ad trademark. Pete was featured in their first commercial in 1964. By 1966, he was part of a then-famous "Putt-Putt to Pizza Hut" campaign. Through the years, the cartoon character underwent numerous changes, though his basic message remained "Come to Pizza Hut." In 1967, while promoting their beef topping pizza, Pete dressed up in chaps and "rustled up all the beef-eaters out there." In 1967, he went mod, advertising "Pizza Power" and announcing he was now "doing his own thing." Somewhere along the line, Pizza Pete lost his appeal and slipped out of the limelight.

In 1970, Ed McMahon and Doc Severinson delivered live 60-second Pizza Hut ads on the *Tonight Show*. In 1972, comedian Rich Little did a series of TV spots impersonating stars including Jack Benny, Humphrey Bogart, Jimmy Stewart, John Wayne, and W.C. Fields—enjoying Pizza Hut pizza, of course.

Pizza Hut established its own Marketing Department in 1972. This department became a foodservice industry trendsetter in 1976, when they helped found the Consumer Reports Eating Share Trends (CREST) survey. By using survey data, Pizza Hut can pinpoint consumer responses to their advertising and discover the public's dining-out purchasing habits and patterns.

As the years have passed, they've changed their advertising approach; however, the message has always remained consistent: "Pizza Hut understands pizza—and the people who love it." A relatively new concept, a line of "Pizza Lovers" pies, features various toppings at special prices. Their motive is to create "brand preferences" among their customers, similar to the sort of name recognition Big Macs and Whoppers now enjoy.

Kids' marketing is the newest name of the game at Pizza Hut. From their first foray into the world of children—with a promotional link to the movie, *The Land Before Time*, their strategy of appealing to kids has led them to become major sponsors of the Nickelodeon Cable Channel, and to continuing promotional association with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. They've also instituted a system-wide "Kids' Night." Every Tuesday evening, children 12 and under can eat free at Pizza Hut (when accompanied by an adult). Roger Rydell, Pizza Hut's director of public affairs, says all these efforts have "really solidified our family image that we've been striving to reinforce."

Only recently has Pizza Hut entered into a more aggressive ad style—possibly an outgrowth of its new affiliation with mega-company PepsiCo. As the McDonald's Corpora-

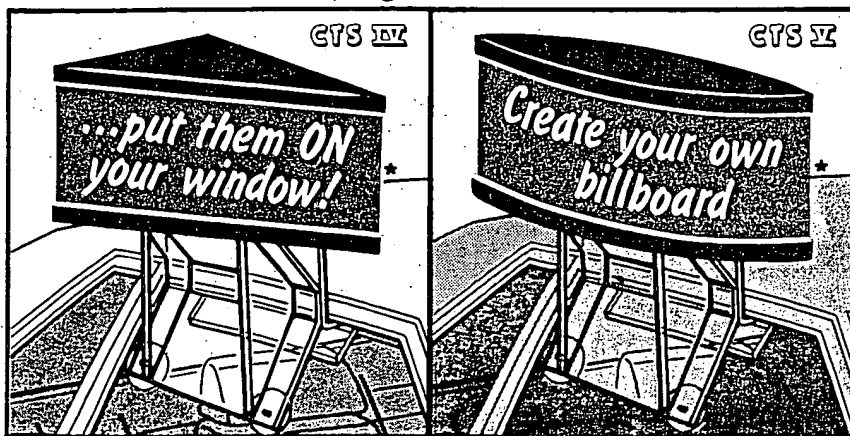
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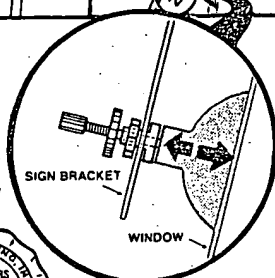
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